

2020

President

Live Updates

Paths to Victory

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Nov. 5, 2020, 8:44 a.m. ET

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It remains one of the most surprising facts about voting in the United States: While the popular vote elects members of Congress, mayors, governors, state legislators and [even more obscure](#) local officials, it [does not determine the winner of the presidency](#), the highest office in the land.

That important decision ultimately falls to the [Electoral College](#). When Americans cast their ballots, they are actually voting for a slate of electors appointed by their state's political parties who are pledged to support that party's candidate. (They don't always do so.)

This leads to an intense focus on [battleground states](#) as candidates look

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